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TAGS: KISL KPAL PREL IS AE

SUBJECT: HAMAS AND FATAH AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT

REF: STATE 16868

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador spoke to Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed (AbZ) on February 11 to relay reftel themes on the Hamas-Fatah agreement in principle for a National Unity Government (NUG). The UAEG has issued two press releases regarding the Hamas-Fatah Agreement, and Abu Mazen has spoken to UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed and others with the UAEG leadership over the past few days (paras 3-4).

¶2. (C) Although cautious, AbZ pointed to several positive results from the Mecca meeting. "Let's compare where we were to where are today," he pointed out. The goal was to put an end to the violence and factional infighting. AbZ added that although Hamas will still have the majority with nine ministerial slots, there would be six ministers from Fatah, including Salam Fayyad (whom AbZ and the UAE leadership hold in high esteem) plus four independents in the new government. The UAEG had passed a message to the Palestinians that the make-up of the new Government should not be announced before a Trilateral or follow-on Quartet meetings had occurred. The UAE, like others, would take a "wait and see" attitude as to the programs of the NUG. AbZ agreed that more details on the NUG plan and make-up were needed. And, of course, Hamas would need to abide by the agreement. AbZ underscored his belief that the new set-up showed that Abu Mazen had explored all available options. If, down the road, Abu Mazen found it necessary to dissolve the government and call new elections, no one would be able to fault his commitment at Mecca to a peaceful solution and efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people.

¶3. (U) February 9 WAM statement titled "The UAE Has Welcomed the Reconciliation Accord Reached by Palestinian Factions, Fatah and Hamas in the Holy City of Mecca"

Begin Text:

In a statement to WAM, UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said: "We have been following the Mecca talks between Fatah and Hamas with great interest." Sheikh Abdullah added: "This agreement which was brokered under the auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, sets the stage for cementing Palestinian unity. It also offers an opportunity to launch an active Palestinian, Arab and international campaign to end the embargo -- and with it -- the unwarranted suffering of the Palestinian people. This active campaign should ultimately lead to revival of the peace process."

Sheikh Abdullah further voiced the UAE's commendation of the role played by King Abdullah to reach the agreement, adding that such a historic agreement would undoubtedly be protected by the Palestinian people. "We will see substantial results on the ground within the coming few days," he said.

Sheikh Abdullah went on to say: "Along with other sisterly Arab

countries, the UAE will stand by the Palestinian people under the leadership of President Mahmood Abbas.

This unqualified support would continue until our Palestinian brethren attain their own state with Jerusalem as its capital." End Text.

14. (U) February 10 WAM statement titled "Khalifa Telephoned by Palestinian, Senegalese Leaders"

Begin Text:

President H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Saturday received a telephone call from the President of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas.

Sheikh Khalifa was briefed on the Makkah accord between both Fatah and Hamas under the auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.

Sheikh Khalifa welcomed the accord, which would form a starting point for consolidating and boosting Palestinian national unity and would be the beginning of an earnest Arab and international move to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and the embargo imposed on them.

Abbas thanked Sheikh Khalifa for his continuous support of the Palestinian people and for his efforts in enhancing stability and peace, and for pushing the peace process and national unity among Palestinians in a way that will boost efforts establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. End Text.

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